

Oct. 26 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

The legislation I am signing today will improve emergency wireless communications in several ways. First, it will make 9-1-1 the universal emergency telephone number for wireless and “wireline” telephones across the United States. Currently, there are 20 different emergency wireless numbers in different States. Second, it will encourage statewide coordination of the efforts of public safety and law enforcement officials to protect our citizens and save lives. Finally, it will increase private sector investment

in emergency wireless services by providing wireless companies with the same level of liability protection that “wireline” telecommunications companies have.

I want to thank Members of Congress, the wireless industry, public safety officials, and medical professionals who worked together to pass this important legislation.

NOTE: S. 800, approved October 26, was assigned Public Law No. 106-81.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation To Strengthen Social Security and Medicare

October 26, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith for your immediate consideration a legislative proposal entitled the “Strengthen Social Security and Medicare Act of 1999.”

The Social Security system is one of the cornerstones of American national policy and together with the additional protections afforded by the Medicare system, has helped provide retirement security for millions of Americans over the last 60 years. However, the long-term solvency of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds is not guaranteed. The Social Security trust fund is currently expected to become insolvent starting in 2034 as the number of retired workers doubles. The Medicare system also faces significant financial shortfalls, with the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund projected to become exhausted in 2015. We need to take additional steps to strengthen Social Security and Medicare for future generations of Americans.

In addition to preserving Social Security and Medicare, the Congress and the President have a responsibility to future generations to reduce the debt held by the public. Paying down the debt will produce substantial interest savings, and this legislation proposes to devote these entirely to Social Security after 2010. At the same time, by contributing to the growth of the overall economy debt reduction will improve the Government’s ability to fulfill its responsibilities and to face future challenges, including preserving and strengthening Social Security and Medicare.

The enclosed bill would help achieve these goals by devoting the entire Social Security surpluses to debt reduction, extending the solvency of Social Security to 2050, protecting Social Security and Medicare funds in the budget process, reserving one-third of the non-Social Security surplus to strengthen and modernize Medicare, and paying down the debt by 2015. It is clear and straightforward legislation that would strengthen and preserve Social Security and Medicare for our children and grandchildren. The bill would:

- Extend the life of Social Security from 2034 to 2050 by reinvesting the interest savings from the debt reduction resulting from Social Security surpluses.
- Establish a Medicare surplus reserve equal to one-third of any on-budget surplus for the total of the period of fiscal years 2000 through 2009 to strengthen and modernize Medicare.
- Add a further protection for Social Security and Medicare by extending the budget enforcement rules that have provided the foundation for our fiscal discipline, including the discretionary caps and pay-as-you-go budget rules.

I urge the prompt and favorable consideration of this proposal.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 26, 1999.